

Thomas Cramphin Building
3209-11 M Street
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-118

HABS
DC
GEO
77-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

THOMAS CRAMPHIN BUILDING

HABS
DC
GEO
77-

Location: 3209-3211 M Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.
(Note: M Street was formerly called Falls Street and also Bridge Street. The old house numbers were probably 148 and 150 Bridge Street.)

Present Owner: Phelps (Phoebe) Comley Havens

Present Occupants: George A. Comley, florist, 3209 M Street
James Randolph, barber shop, 3211 M Street

Present Use: Commercial with apartments above.

Statement of Significance: Once the Columbian Gazette Office, this early 19th century commercial building is typical of Georgetown architecture of the period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure was built. Unless otherwise stated, all references are to the records in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, District of Columbia. The site is in Square 1207 (lot 801) part of Old Georgetown lot 13.

1784 Deed October 19, 1784 recorded in Liber C folios 12, 13 and 14 in Montgomery County Records, Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland
Robert Bradley Tyler and wife Dryden

To
Joseph Sprigg Belt
Anthony Reintzel
"Lease for 99 years".

1792 Deed June 6, 1792 recorded September 14, 1792 in Liber A folio 155
Robert Bradley Tyler and wife Dryden

To
Philip Barton Key

1792 Deed December 20, 1792 recorded in Liber A folio 183
Anthony Reintzel

To
William Deakins, Jr.
Thomas Beall of Georgetown Trustees of
Thomas Lancton

- 1793 Assignment of lease December 8, 1792
recorded January 21, 1793 in Liber A
folio 179
Joseph Belt
To
Anthony Reintzel
- 1794 Lease May 16, 1794 recorded May 20, 1794
in Liber B folio 31
Joseph S. Belt
To
Thomas Orme
- 1796 Deed June 3, 1796 recorded June 4, 1796
in Liber B folio 486
Anthony Reintzel
To
Thomas J. Beatty
(3209 M Street)
- 1796 Deed June 4, 1796 recorded June 4, 1796
in Liber B folio 487
Thomas J. Beatty
To
Thomas Cramphin
(3209 M Street)
- 1801 Lease for 99 years May 27, 1801
recorded in Liber V5 folio 363
Thomas Orme
To
W. S. Chandler
- 1801 Deed February 16, 1801 recorded in
Liber G7 folio 137
Thomas Orme
To
W. S. Chandler
- 1802 Deed April 30, 1802 recorded in
Liber H8 folio 164
W. S. Chandler
To
Thomas Cramphin
- 1835 Deed August 29, 1835 recorded September 14, 1835
in Liber WB55 folio 249
John Marbury, trustee of real estate of
Philip B. Key
To
William Redin
- 1839 Deed November 5, 1839 recorded November 8, 1839
in Liber J.A.S. 186 folio 244
William Redin
To
Joseph N. Fearson
(3209 M Street)

- 1859 Deed December 24, 1858 recorded January 4, 1859
in Liber J.A.S. 167 folio 63
William Redin
To
Richard Cruikshank
(3211 M Street)
- 1862 Deed October 25, 1862 recorded November 7, 1862
in Liber J.A.S. 225 folio 167
Richard Cruikshank et ux Ann Jane
To
Thomas J. Bicksler
(3211 M Street)
- 1870 Deed July 6, 1870 recorded July 8, 1870
in Liber 618 folio 281
John C. McKelden
To
Louis W. Ritchie
sale for default
(3211 M Street)
- 1887 Deed December 30, 1886 recorded January 5, 1887
in Liber 186 folio 244
Mary J. Foertsch and husband Joseph C.
To
Charles B. Cropley
George G. Boteler
John D. G. Crampton
- 1887 Deed and Agreement February 8, 1887
recorded February 16, 1887 in
Liber 1233 folio 312
Louis W. Ritchie et ux Mary J.
Charles B. Cropley, unmarried
George G. Boteler et ux Sarah M.
John D. G. Crampton
(3209 M Street)
- 1894 August 9, 1894: "John D. G. Crampton yesterday
sold to Charles B. Cropley an undivided 1/3
interest in part of lot 13, Square 37, located
on the north side of M Street near High, improved."
[Evening Star, August 9, 1894]
- 1898 Title good in Louis W. Ritchie through April 15,
1898 (3211 M Street)

2. Date of erection: Tax assessment records seem to indicate that the building was constructed between 1808 and 1813. (Thomas Cramphin assessed for part of lot 13 for \$9,000 on a three story brick building - Assessment Records 1808, 1813-15, Peabody Room, Georgetown Branch, D.C. Public Library).
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The following building permits were found in the Building Permit Office, District Building, District of Columbia.

216660 September, 1938 for repair (3209-3211)
228944 December, 1939 for a sign (3209)
246421 August, 1941 for repair (3209-3211)
A23335 April, 1951 for plumbing (3209)
B34840 May, 1958 (3209-3211)

"repair porch, new toilet room fixtures, new electric wiring" "first floor (opening onto M Street) is now occupied as florist (3209) and barber (3211) shop. The proposed new occupancy is for the 2nd floor as a private studio and the 3rd and 4th (attic) floors as stock rooms." (All this space entered from the rear, or alley.) "building given as 3 storys, slate roof, exterior wall thickness as 1st - 17"; 2nd - 17" 3rd - 17" and 12".

6. Important old views: None known.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Washington directories provide the following tenant information.

3209 M Street

1886-1918	G. W. Offutt, grocers
1919-1937	D. E. Trenis, explosives
1938-1966	George A. Comley, florist

3211 M Street

1886-1918	G. W. Offutt, grocers
1919	W. J. Abrams, barber
1920-1928	Henry T. Redman, barber
1929	Vacant
1930-1938	John H. Gibson, barber
1939-1966	Randolph's Barber Shop

Prepared by Dr. James Philip Noffsinger
Architect
National Park Service
August 16, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: An early nineteenth-century brick double structure, the Thomas Cramphin Building is noteworthy for its atypical upper fenestration.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 44' (two unusually wide bays) x 60' (to alley, including dock); three-and-one-half stories in height.
2. Foundations: Stone rubble masonry.
3. Wall construction: (South) facade is of Flemish bond, painted very light orange-pink; north elevation is unpainted red brick of common bond with headers every six courses. Stone belt course crosses facade under second-floor windows. Party wall indicated by brick ridge of one course header rowlocks and one course stretchers paralleling gables.
4. Chimneys: Brick chimneys over end walls on each quadrant of gable roof measure 1'-8" x 4'-8"; 6" cement caps bevel inward at top.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Shop doorways on first floor are comparatively modern. Single-paned wooden

shop door placed at east side of each half of building. Unpainted modern vertical-planked rear doors at second floor level, with single-paned transoms above, open from loading platform.

- b. Windows and shutters: Shop windows on the first floor are comparatively modern. Two second-floor triple windows have wooden casings with narrow mullions supporting lintels under brick infilling below brick segmental relieving arches. West triple wooden double-hung sash window has two-over-two-light arrangement at sides and six-over-six in center. East window has three-over-three-light flanking sash and twelve-over-twelve lights in center. Since both triple windows have old blown-glass lights, it is problematical which muntin design is the original one. Stone belt course serves as sill. Third-floor triple windows approximately half the customary height are set below splayed flush brick lintels and have stone sills. Wooden double-hung west window has one-over-one light at sides and three-over-three-light center sash. East window has (fixed?) three-over-three-light sides and two six-paned casements in the center. No shutters.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: East-west gabled roof is slate-covered.
- b. Framing: Unknown; probably wooden.
- c. Cornice, eaves: Slightly projecting three-course brick cornice is composed of Flemish bond course, "sawtooth" course and upper course of headers. Low iron snow railing is set at edge of roof. Gutter and downspout may be original.
- d. Dormers: Single wooden-faced gabled dormers project from south gable on each side of central roof ridge: six-over-six-light windows are set under wood-infilled round-arched opening. Two dormers on axis on north gable cannot be observed from grade.

- c. Technical Description of Interiors: Not recorded because
unable to secure access.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Thomas Cramphin Building faces south onto M Street, N.W., near the northwest corner of the intersection of that street and Wisconsin Avenue. The lot rises steeply to the rear; the second floor level and loading platform are just above grade.
2. Enclosures: Fieldstone retaining wall defines north boundary of lot at alley.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: Fronts on concrete public sidewalk to south.
5. Landscaping: None.

Prepared by Thomas R. Martinson
Student Assistant Architect
National Park Service
August 31, 1966